CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

INTRODUCTION

These rules of procedure were adopted taking into account the relevant provisions of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, including the agreement reached following appropriate consultations among the member States during that session which the General Assembly welcomed in the Final Document.

I. Functions and membership

1. The Conference on Disarmament (hereinafter referred to as the Conference) is a disarmament negotiating forum open to the nuclear weapon States and 61 other States (Annex I).

2. The membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals.

3. All member States of the Conference shall take part in its work in conditions of full equality as independent States, in accordance with the principle of sovereign equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

II. Representation and accreditation

4. The delegation of a member State of the Conference shall consist of a head of delegation and other representatives, advisers, and experts, as may be required.

5. Each delegation shall be accredited by a letter on the authority of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the member State, addressed to the President of the Conference.

6. The delegations shall be seated following the English alphabetical list of membership.

III. Sessions

7. The Conference shall have an annual session divided into three parts of 10 weeks, 7 weeks and 7 weeks respectively. The first part shall begin the penultimate week of the month of January. The Conference shall decide the actual dates of the three parts of its annual session at the close of the previous year's session.

8. The President of the Conference, in full consultation with and with the agreement of all its members, may convene the Conference in special session.

IV. Presidency

9. When the Conference is in session, the Presidency of the Conference shall rotate among all its members; each President shall preside for a four-working-week period. The rotation which began in January 1979, based on the English alphabetical list of membership, shall be followed.

10. If the head of the delegation which performs the function of President cannot be present, he may be replaced by a member of his delegation. If no member of the delegation holding the chair is able to perform the function of President, the delegation next in order of rotation shall temporarily assume this function.

11. Apart from exercising the normal functions of a presiding officer and in addition to the powers conferred upon him elsewhere by these rules, the President shall, in full consultation with the Conference and under its authority, represent it in its relations with States, with the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations and with other international organizations.

12. During the period when the Conference is not in session the functions of the President shall be carried out by the representative of the member State which presided over the last plenary meeting of the Conference, except that between the annual sessions of the Conference the inter-sessional functions of the Presidency shall pass, at the beginning of the calendar year, to the representative of the member State assuming the Presidency next in order of rotation.

V. Secretariat

13. At the request of the Conference the Secretary-General of the United Nations, following consultations with the Conference, will appoint the Secretary-General of the Conference, who shall also act as his personal representative, to assist the Conference and its President in organizing the business and timetables of the Conference.

14. Under the authority of the Conference and its President, the Secretary-General shall, inter alia, assist in the preparation of both the provisional agenda of the Conference and the first draft of the reports of the Conference to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

15. At the request of the Conference the Secretary-General shall provide professional assistance to the Conference by preparing background papers and bibliographies on issues which are the subject of negotiations in the Conference as well as by compiling data and information relevant to the conduct of negotiations.

16. The Secretary-General shall also perform such other functions as are entrusted to him by these rules or by the Conference.

17. The Secretary-General of the United Nations will be requested to provide the staff as well as the necessary assistance and services needed by the Conference and any subsidiary bodies which it may establish.

VI. Conduct of work and adoption of decisions

18. The Conference shall conduct its work and adopt its decisions by consensus.

VII. Organization of work

19. The work of the Conference shall be conducted in plenary meetings, as well as under any additional arrangements agreed by the Conference, such as informal meetings with or without experts.

20. The Conference shall convene in plenary meetings in accordance with a schedule to be agreed upon. These meetings shall be held in public unless the Conference decides otherwise. In the event that it is decided to hold a private meeting, the Conference shall also decide whether to issue a communiqué of the meeting. The communiqué shall adequately reflect the substance of the proceedings and decisions taken by the Conference.

21. If the Conference is unable to take a decision on the substance of an item under negotiation, it will consider the subsequent examination of that item.

22. The Conference may hold informal meetings, with or without experts, to consider as appropriate substantive matters as well as questions concerning its organization of work. When requested by the Conference, the Secretariat shall provide unofficial summaries of those meetings in the working languages.

23. Whenever the Conference deems it advisable for the effective performance of its functions, including when it appears that there is a basis to negotiate a draft treaty or other draft texts, the Conference may establish subsidiary bodies, such as ad hoc sub committees, working groups, technical groups or groups of governmental experts, open to all member States of the Conference unless the Conference decides otherwise. The Conference shall define the mandate for each of such subsidiary bodies and provide appropriate support for their work.

24. The Conference shall decide if its own rules of procedure may be adapted to the specific requirements of its subsidiary bodies. The meetings of the subsidiary bodies shall be informal unless the Conference decides otherwise. The Secretariat shall provide assistance to the subsidiary bodies, as requested, including the preparation of unofficial summaries of the subsidiary bodies' proceedings in the working languages of the Conference.

25. The approval by consensus of reports shall not be interpreted as affecting in any manner the essential requirement that such reports must reflect faithfully the positions of all the members of the respective organs.

26. The Conference and its subsidiary bodies shall normally meet at the Office of the United Nations at Geneva.

VIII. Agenda and programme of work

27. At the beginning of each annual session, the Conference shall adopt its agenda for the year. In doing so, the Conference shall take into account the recommendations made to it by the General Assembly, the proposals presented by member States of the Conference and the decisions of the Conference.

28. On the basis of its agenda, the Conference, at the beginning of its annual session, shall establish its programme of work, which will include a schedule of its activities for that session, taking also into account the recommendations, proposals and decisions referred to in rule 27.

29. The provisional agenda and the programme of work shall be drawn up by the President of the Conference with the assistance of the Secretary-General and presented to the Conference for consideration and adoption.

30. The subject of statements made in plenary meetings will normally correspond to the topic then under discussion in accordance with the agreed programme of work. However, it is the right of any member State of the Conference to raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference at a plenary meeting and to have full opportunity of presenting its views on any subject which it may consider to merit attention.

31. While the work of the Conference is in progress member States may request the inclusion of an urgent item in the agenda. The Conference shall decide whether and when it should be considered.

IX. Participation by States not members of the Conference

32. Representatives of non-member States shall have reserved seats in the conference room during plenary meetings and, if the Conference so decides, at other meetings.

33. Interested States not members of the Conference may submit to the Conference written proposals or working documents on measures of disarmament that are the subject of negotiation in the Conference and may participate in the discussion of the subject-matter of such proposals or working documents.

34. The Conference will invite States not members of the Conference, upon their request, to express views in the Conference when the particular concerns of those States are under discussion. Having considered such a request, the Conference will, through its President, transmit an invitation to that effect to the State or States concerned.

35. The Conference may also decide to invite the States referred to in rules 33 and 34 to participate in informal meetings and in meetings of its subsidiary bodies, in which case the procedure of rule 34 is applicable.

36. The provisions of rules 4 and 5 shall also apply to delegations of non-member States participating in the work of the Conference.

X. Languages, records and documents

37. Simultaneous interpretation, verbatim records of public plenary meetings and documents shall be provided in the languages used within the United Nations system by member States of the Conference participating in its work. Any representative may speak in his own language provided he makes available simultaneous interpretation into a working language.

38. Numbers shall be given in the order in which documents are received by the Secretariat. Check lists of all documents reproduced by the Secretariat shall be available from time to time.

39. Documents of the Eighteen Nations Disarmament Committee (ENDC), the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) and the Committee on Disarmament (CD) series may be referred to without their re-submission.

40. Verbatim records and formal and other relevant documents of the Conference shall be distributed to States Members of the United Nations normally within two weeks. Official documents of the Conference will be made available for public use.

XI. Invitations to organs of the United Nations system

41. The Conference may decide to invite specialized agencies, the IAEA and other organs of the United Nations system to provide information as appropriate if the Conference decides that doing so would advance its work.

XII. Non-governmental organizations

42. All communications from non-governmental organizations to the Conference, to the President or to the Secretariat, shall be retained by the Secretariat and be made available to delegations upon request. A list of all such communications shall be circulated to the Conference.

XIII. Reports to the United Nations General Assembly

43. The Conference shall submit, through the President, reports to the United Nations General Assembly annually or more frequently as appropriate.

44. The drafts of such reports shall be prepared by the President of the Conference with the assistance of the Secretary-General and shall be made available to all member States of the Conference for consideration at least two weeks before the scheduled date for their adoption.

45. The reports of the Conference shall be factual and reflect the negotiations and work of the Conference. Unless the Conference decides otherwise, the drafts shall contain:

(a) The agenda;

(b) A summary of specific requests addressed to the Conference by the United Nations General Assembly at its preceding regular session;

(c) Sectional headings in accordance with items comprised in (a) and (b) above and other matters raised in the Conference during the year;

(d) Conclusions and decisions;

(e) A table of contents and an index of verbatim records, by country and subject, of the period covered by the reports;

(f) Working papers and proposals submitted during the year;

(g) Verbatim records of the meetings held during the year, distributed as a separate annex;

(h) Other relevant documents.

46. The Conference shall adopt the annual report at the end of its session. This report shall be made available to all Member States of the United Nations before the opening of the regular sessions of the United Nations General Assembly. All other reports shall be circulated without delay.

XIV. Amendments

47. These rules of procedure may be amended by decision of the Conference.

Annex I*

Algeria
Argentina
Australia
Austria
Bangladesh
Belarus
Belgium
Brazil
Bulgaria
Cameroon
Canada
Chile
China
Colombia
Cuba
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Ecuador
Egypt
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Germany
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran, Islamic Republic of
Iraq
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Japan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Malaysia
Mexico
Mongolia
Morocco
Myanmar
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nigeria
Norway
Pakistan
Peru
Poland
Republic of Korea
Romania
Russian Federation
Senegal
Slovakia
South Africa
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sweden
Switzerland
Syrian Arab Republic
Tunisia
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America
Venezuela
Viet Nam
Yugoslavia
Zaire
Zimbabwe

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* Membership of the Conference on Disarmament as at 5 August 1999.